

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), Congresswoman Diana DeGette (D-CO), and Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO) are leading a group of 46 House of Representatives members in support of public disclosure requirements for chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing on public lands. In a [letter](#) to U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, the group described the disclosure requirement as a "critical step forward in encouraging the oil and gas industry to be more transparent and responsibly address the potential implications of hydraulic fracturing on water supplies and public health." In November 2010, Salazar said the Department of the Interior, which has the authority to require disclosure on public lands, is considering such a rule.

"Communities across America have seen their water contaminated by the chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process," said Hinchey. "When big energy companies decide they want to drill on public lands, they should have to tell the public exactly what chemicals they're pumping into the ground. We already know of several carcinogens and neurotoxins that are used in drilling process. If the industry had their way, we wouldn't find out about the other chemicals being used until they show up in the water supply. The people have a right to know what is being done to their land and what risks that may carry."

"Oil and gas companies continue to assure us that their drilling projects are safe," said DeGette, "but those same companies refuse to back up their assertions by disclosing the chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process. Without disclosure, authorities investigating incidents of concern to communities and residents are unable to prove one way or another the role hydraulic fracturing might have played in the contamination. Natural gas is an abundant and cleaner energy source that we need while incorporating more alternative energy sources into a comprehensive and strategic energy policy for the United States to execute going forward. It is also our responsibility, however, to ensure that its extraction does not come at the expense of the health of local communities."

"For too long the Bush Administration let big oil dictate the rules and undercut basic safeguards," said U.S. Rep. Polis. "I applaud Secretary Salazar's common sense approach, restoring a much-needed balance in our energy policy. Wherever hydraulic fracturing occurs, public lands or off, we must ensure that the appropriate oversight is in place so we can tell if and when dangerous chemicals are being used, endangering water sources and the public's health"

Onshore gas wells on Interior-managed lands account for 11 percent of the nation's natural gas

supply. Hinchey, DeGette, and Polis introduced the Fracking Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals (FRAC) Act in the 111th Congress to require the disclosure of chemicals used on both public and private lands. The FRAC Act would also close a loophole created in the Energy Policy Act of 2005, which exempts fracking from regulation through the Safe Drinking Water Act. Hinchey is also the author of the provision which led to the initiation of an U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study on the risks posed to drinking water through the fracking process.

The text of the letter along with a list of co-signers follows. A PDF is here: [Salazar Letter.pdf](#) 

January 12, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Secretary Salazar:

We are writing to express our strong support of your recent announcement of plans to develop a new policy for the public disclosure of chemical compounds used in hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking, on public lands. This is a critical step forward in encouraging the oil and gas industry to be more transparent and responsibly address the potential implications of hydraulic fracturing on water supplies and public health.

As oil and natural gas development expands across many regions of our country, the use of hydraulic fracturing is growing as well, bringing drilling operations closer and closer to communities and sources of drinking water. This process of developing natural gas by injecting a mixture of chemicals, water, and sand into underground rock formations, has resulted in complaints from neighboring communities that their water supplies have become contaminated. As our nation faces the challenges of reducing the impacts of fossil fuels while transitioning to a cleaner energy future, the Interior Department must be vigilant in ensuring that oil and gas development is done in accordance with safe and environmentally sound standards. Should we

fail to do this, we will pay a heavy price.

The public has a right to know what toxins might be going into the ground near their communities, and what might be leaking into their drinking water – they have a right to be well-informed. Requiring transparency in the disclosure of potent toxins used in the fracking process is an important start to what we hope will be broader, comprehensive energy development policies, which will embrace best practices for both traditional and renewable energy development.

We also applaud your assurances that you intend to work with the oil and gas industry, environmentalists and state energy regulators to guide your Department in the development of this new policy. Giving all stakeholders a seat at the table will ensure transparency in the regulation process as well, leading to stronger and more viable disclosure policies.

Thank you again for your efforts to protect the public lands and public health through this undertaking.

Sincerely,

Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey
Rep. Diana DeGette
Rep. Jared Polis
Rep. Gary Ackerman
Rep. Barbara Lee
Rep. Howard L. Berman
Rep. Earl Blumenauer
Rep. Lois Capps
Rep. William Lacy Clay
Rep. Steve Cohen
Rep. Gerald Connolly
Rep. Keith Ellison
Rep. Eliot L. Engel
Rep. Sam Farr
Rep. Barney Frank
Rep. Raul Grijalva
Rep. Mazie Hirono
Rep. Rush D. Holt
Rep. Michael M. Honda

Rep. Dennis J. Kucinich
Rep. James R. Langevin
Rep. Zoe Lofgren
Rep. Nita M. Lowey
Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney
Rep. Betty McCollum
Rep. Mike Thompson
Rep. James P. Moran
Rep. Jerrold Nadler
Rep. John W. Olver
Rep. William L. Owens
Rep. John P. Sarbanes
Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky
Rep. Jose Serrano
Rep. Jackie Speier
Rep. Fortney Pete Stark
Rep. Paul Tonko
Rep. Chris Van Hollen
Rep. Lynn C. Woolsey
Rep. Mike Quigley
Rep. Chellie Pingree
Rep. Jay Inslee
Rep. Bob Filner
Rep. Dale E. Kildee
Rep. Donna F. Edwards
Rep. Steven R. Rothman
Rep. Adam Smith

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Hinchey, DeGette, and Polis Lead

46 House Members in Support of Fracking Chemical

Disclosure Requirements on Public Land

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safeguards,” said U.S. Rep. Polis. “I applaud Secretary Salazar’s common sense approach, restoring a much-needed balance in our energy policy. Wherever hydraulic fracturing occurs, public lands or off, we must ensure that the appropriate oversight is in place so we can tell if and when dangerous chemicals are being used, endangering water sources and the public’s health”

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